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Letter dated 17 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 17 February 2001 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the flagrant act of aggression carried out by United States and United Kingdom aircraft against Iraq in the vicinity of the city of Baghdad and its suburbs on the evening of 16 February 2001 which led to the destruction of civilian property as well as a number of civilian fatalities and injuries.

The Minister affirms that this act of aggression is comparable to the daily acts of aggression being perpetrated by United States and United Kingdom aircraft taking off from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory in which Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are key partners, so that they bear full responsibility under international law. This includes liability for full compensation for the loss and damage, in both human and material terms, that is caused by such acts of aggression.

The Minister adds that this perfidious act of aggression comes at a time when he is preparing for comprehensive dialogue with you, so that the United Nations has an additional responsibility to condemn it and to take urgent and concrete steps to prevent its recurrence. The Minister looks forward to receiving a positive response from you.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed **al-Duri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 17 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On the evening of 16 February 2001 United States and United Kingdom aircraft carried out a new act of aggression against Iraq in the vicinity of the city of Baghdad and its suburbs, destroying a number of civilian installations and homes belonging to Iraqi citizens, and causing several civilian fatalities and injuries. The work of assessing the damage is still under way.

This escalation of United States and United Kingdom aggression against Iraq coincides with an escalation of Zionist aggression against the Palestinian people, confirming yet again that the United States and Zionism are one and the same thing when it comes to aggression against the Arab people and peoples throughout the world.

The claim by the United States that this was an act of self-defence demonstrates contempt for the United Nations and its Charter, as well as international law. This act of aggression, like all such acts which have been carried out inside the two aerial exclusion zones since 1991, is a unilateral use of armed force against the sovereignty of an independent State. The United Nations and the international community at large should condemn this act of aggression and hold the aggressors responsible for all of the consequences arising therefrom.

The act of aggression of 16 February 2001 is comparable to the daily acts of aggression which have been carried out since August 1992 by United States and United Kingdom aircraft coming from Saudi and Kuwaiti territory, in which Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are key partners, so that they bear full responsibility under international law. This includes liability for full compensation for the loss and damage, in both human and material terms, that is caused by these acts of aggression.

Furthermore, these acts of aggression, including the attack of 16 February 2001, have been carried out from within the demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait in which the United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observer Mission (UNIKOM) is based. One of the principal functions of UNIKOM is to monitor acts of military aggression carried out inside the demilitarized zone and to immediately inform the Secretary-General thereof, taking action to prevent their recurrence. This is something that the international observer mission has so far failed to do, just as it has failed to safeguard the inviolability of the demilitarized zone, indicating that there are grave shortcomings in its work.

This flagrant act of United States and United Kingdom aggression and this grave escalation come at a time when we are preparing for comprehensive dialogue with you, so that we can inform you and through you the international community of the unjust, tyrannical and arbitrary treatment to which Iraq has been subjected since 1990. This places an additional responsibility upon you and the United Nations to condemn this grave act of military aggression and serious escalation and to take urgent and concrete steps to prevent its recurrence, so as to create the right conditions for dialogue with you.

I look forward to a positive response from you and, in renewing the assurance of my highest consideration, request that you circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammed Said **Al-Sahaf**
Minister for Foreign Affairs